

B(under different pressures. In general, a premolded part has a smaller coefficient of thermal shrinkage, as a pressure is higher.

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action that was mailed on December 12, 2001.

Claims 1-4 were rejected as being anticipated by or as being unpatentable over Nitto. Claims 1-4 were also rejected as being unpatentable over Nitto in view of Vogdes or Davis. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention is distinguished from the Nitto reference in that the Nitto reference uses a thermally weldable (melt processable) fluororesin powder (a fluorine resin powder material with hot melt characteristics) to bond tubes with a small diameter. The shrinking force exerted with a medium diameter tube is used to apply a force to the small diameter tubes, and the small diameter tubes are bonded with the thermally weldable fluororesin powder. In contrast, the present invention joins at least two premolded parts of modified polytetrafluoroethylene having difference coefficients of thermal shrinkage. Thus, the present invention is not anticipated by the Nitto reference.

Moreover, inasmuch as the Nitto reference never teaches the joining of premolded parts of modified PTFE having different coefficients of thermal

shrinkage, the present invention would not have been obvious from the Nitto disclosure, even as modified by Vogdes or Davis.

The Vogdes and Davis references teach only melt processable fluororesins. Thus, for instance, TEFZEL used by Davis is an ethylene-tetrafluoroethylene copolymer, which is melt extrudable. See the excerpt form "DuPont Products Database Search Results" (www.dupont.com/cgi-bin/corp/proddbxcgi), enclosed herewith.

Claims 1-4 were rejected as being unpatentable over a reference which may be referred to as the "Matsushita Electric Industries" reference in view of Vogdes, Davis, or Nitto. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention is distinguished from the Matsushita reference in that the resins to be processed all relate to melt processable (extrudable) technology. Therefore, inasmuch as the Matsushita reference never teaches the joining of premolded parts of modified PTFE having different coefficients of thermal shrinkage, the present invention would not have been obvious from the Matsushita disclosure, even as modified by Vogdes or Davis or Nitto.

Conclusion

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Mr. Richard J. Gallagher, Registration No. 28,781 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicant respectfully petitions for a three (3) month extension of time for filing a response in connection with the present application and the required fee of \$890.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Marked Up Version of Amendments
DuPont Excerpt

MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 7, delete the paragraph at lines 8-12 and replace it with the following paragraph:

Two or[e] more premolded parts having different coefficients of thermal shrinkage can be obtained by premolding the same modified PTFE powder under different pressures. In general, a premolded part has a smaller coefficient of thermal shrinkage, as a pressure is higher.